

University of Montana

ScholarWorks at University of Montana

University of Montana News Releases, 1928,
1956-present

University Relations

7-17-1998

\$90,000 boosts UM journalism school's minority program

University of Montana–Missoula. Office of University Relations

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarworks.umt.edu/newsreleases>

Let us know how access to this document benefits you.

Recommended Citation

University of Montana–Missoula. Office of University Relations, "\$90,000 boosts UM journalism school's minority program" (1998). *University of Montana News Releases, 1928, 1956-present*. 15506.
<https://scholarworks.umt.edu/newsreleases/15506>

This News Article is brought to you for free and open access by the University Relations at ScholarWorks at University of Montana. It has been accepted for inclusion in University of Montana News Releases, 1928, 1956-present by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks at University of Montana. For more information, please contact scholarworks@mso.umt.edu.



The University of
Montana

UNIVERSITY RELATIONS • MISSOULA, MT 59812 • 406-243-2522 • FAX: 406-243-4520

NEWS RELEASE

This release is available electronically on INN (News Net.)

July 17, 1998

Contact: Joe Durso Jr., interim dean, (406) 243-4001.

\$90,000 BOOSTS UM JOURNALISM SCHOOL'S MINORITY PROGRAM

MISSOULA --

The University of Montana School of Journalism will use \$90,000 in funding from the nonprofit Freedom Forum to hire an American Indian journalist to teach students minority affairs reporting next year.

The new journalist in residence also will teach beginning journalism part time at Salish Kootenai College in **Pablo**, said Joe Durso Jr., interim dean of UM's journalism school. Durso said the school will fill the yearlong teaching position by January 1999.

The journalism school is boosting its efforts in attracting Indian students to journalism careers and training all journalism students how to cover minority issues. In March, the school received a \$50,000 grant from the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation of Miami to support student journalism projects about Indians, which include television documentaries and a yearly newspaper supplement about significant issues concerning Montana's Indians.

"We're seeking to establish The University of Montana School of Journalism as a leader in Native American journalism," Durso said. "It's a real tribute to how highly regarded our journalism program is by others that they're willing to trust us with these large sums of money."

The \$90,000 from the Freedom Forum will enable the journalist-in-residence program

-more-

to continue during the summer months in addition to the academic year. The money will be used to pay the journalist's salary and travel costs and other expenses associated with the program. Durso said he expects an American Indian journalist will serve as a role model to Indian students and help faculty members assess the school's effectiveness in teaching minority reporting.

Durso noted that Indians are Montana's dominant minority group. "Montana ranks fifth in the nation in percentage of Indian population, and the issues affecting the state's 11 Indian tribes, seven reservations and their neighbors are complex and often contentious," Durso said. "They provide fertile ground for students to learn about other cultures and report about them effectively."

Durso said the journalism school has an obligation to both Indians and newsrooms to increase the number of qualified minority journalists. In recent years, the school has assembled a number of scholarships specifically for minorities and has incorporated minority affairs into its curriculum in significant ways. But Durso said the school needs to find additional ways to make the journalism profession more appealing to Indian students, and the journalist-in-residence program will help.

During each of the past six years, UM journalism students in the Native News Honors Project have visited all Montana reservations to report on such complex topics as health, housing, education, justice, gambling and culture. The students have combined their reporting and photos into a newspaper supplement, which is distributed each spring in a major Montana daily newspaper. This year's supplement, titled "Indian Identity," was distributed last month in the Great Falls Tribune.

That project has attracted attention from beyond Montana. The supplements have won more than a dozen William Randolph Hearst Awards. One reporter/photographer won a \$10,000 scholarship from the Alexia Foundation for World Peace and Cultural Understanding for a story about students on the Northern Cheyenne Reservation who endure a four-hour bus ride to and from school. NBC television anchor and part-time Montana resident Tom Brokaw donated \$1,000 to this year's Native News Honors Project.

Last year's television broadcasts on Indian issues also won acclaim. The Student Documentary Unit's program on sovereignty garnered a Rocky Mountain Emmy Award and a first-place regional award from the Society of Professional Journalists. A graduate student's documentary about Indian basketball was judged Best Television Program by the Native American Journalists Association.

The Freedom Forum is a nonpartisan, international foundation dedicated to free press, free speech and free spirit for all. It was established in 1991 under the direction of founder Allen H. Neuharth as successor to the Gannett Foundation.

###

RM

Local, dailies, tribal papers and colleges, Native American Journalists Association, Montana Newspaper Association, Pacific Northwest Newspaper Association
J-Grant.rl